



# PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The Panhandle's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose from 9.0 percent in December to 9.2 percent in January. Job losses in lumber, mining, electronics, tourism, and catalog companies during 2001 caused income losses that led to job losses in the last few months at retail stores, wholesale operations, transportation facilities, and some service businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. All five Panhandle counties are suffering high unemployment as a result of the recession. In January, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Benewah County was 12.6 percent; in Bonner, 9.3 percent; in Boundary, 7.9 percent; in Kootenai, 8.6 percent; and in Shoshone, 11.6 percent.

Despite the high level of unemployment, January brought some good developments that should ease unemployment in February. These developments included the opening of a second Center Partners call center in Kootenai County, the opening of a Wal-Mart Supercenter in Post Falls, and the relocation of Oxyfresh Worldwide from Spokane to Coeur d'Alene. Together, these developments created about 740 jobs. Another sign of hope was a slowing in the rate of increase in unemployment insurance claims. In the fourth quarter of 2001, initial unemployment claims filed in the five Panhandle Job Service offices were 41.5 percent higher than in the fourth quarter of 2000. In January and February 2002, they were 5.4 percent higher than in January and February 2001.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Benewah County

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe is building a \$600,000, 8,500-square-foot facility for its fish and wildlife programs next to the tribe's Benewah Medical & Wellness Center in Plummer. Forty people work for the tribe's fish and wildlife programs currently housed in the old tribal headquarters outside Plummer. The tribe's fish and wildlife programs have grown during recent years. Part of the growth stemmed from last year's U.S. Supreme Court ruling

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	Jan 2002*	Dec 2001	Jan 2001	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	92,880	91,480	88,510	1.8	5.2
Unemployed	8,500	8,270	6,910	3.0	23.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	9.2	9.0	7.8		
Total Employment	84,380	83,210	81,600	1.7	3.7
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	92,180	91,990	87,880	0.5	5.2
Unemployed	10,650	9,230	9,090	15.7	17.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	11.6%	10.0%	10.3%		
Total Employment	81,530	82,760	78,790	-1.2	3.7
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	65,560	67,000	64,130	-2.1	2.2
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	12,550	13,450	13,700	-6.7	-8.4
Mining	530	570	930	-7.0	-43.0
Construction	3,760	4,540	3,920	-17.2	-4.1
Manufacturing	8,260	8,340	8,850	-1.0	-6.7
Lumber & Wood Products	3,980	4,090	4,190	-2.7	-5.0
All Other Manufacturing	4,280	4,250	4,660	0.7	-8.2
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	53,010	53,550	50,430	-1.0	5.1
Transportation	1,420	1,510	1,390	-6.0	2.2
Communication & Utilities	1,060	1,060	1,080	0.0	-1.9
Wholesale Trade	2,070	2,100	2,090	-1.4	-1.0
Retail Trade	14,190	14,630	14,130	-3.0	0.4
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2,680	2,660	2,450	0.8	9.4
Service & Miscellaneous	17,320	17,220	15,380	0.6	12.6
Government Administration	8,790	8,850	8,440	-0.7	4.1
Government Education	5,480	5,520	5,470	-0.7	0.2
* Preliminary estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

establishing the tribe's ownership of the southern third of Lake Coeur d'Alene.

### Bonner County

- Madeline McClelland recently opened an antique and collectible store called Madeline's Corner on the second floor of Foster's Crossing Antique and Country Market at Fifth and Cedar in Sandpoint.

### Boundary County

- David Koon, M.D., opened Boundary County's first urgent care and women's clinic at 6843 Main Street in Bonners Ferry in mid-February. The walk-in facility includes three exam rooms.

### Kootenai County

- The University of Idaho Research Park in Post Falls recently announced that the Center for Advanced Microelectronics and Biomolecular Research is moving from the University of New Mexico to Post Falls in August. The center, which originally began at the University of Idaho in Moscow making computer chips for NASA, moved to New Mexico in 1992. The center's founder, electronics engineering professor Gary

Maki, now develops bioelectronic sensors for detecting diseases or poisons for medical and antiterrorism purposes. The center, which currently employs 15 people, will occupy one-sixth of the first building at the University of Idaho Research Park near Riverbend Commerce Park and the factory outlets. Local economic development experts view the center, which has the potential to create many more jobs in the next few years, as a vital element in their effort to turn the Interstate 90 corridor between Spokane and Coeur d'Alene into a high-tech corridor.

- An \$11 million expansion and renovation of Coeur d'Alene High School, which began in 2001, is scheduled to be completed this fall. The 50,000-square-foot expansion includes a second gymnasium. The school's 1,300 students continue to attend classes there despite the construction.
- The Greyhound Park in Post Falls is being transformed into an all-entertainment events center. Since dog races ended at its track in 1995, the park facility primarily offers simulcast races and bingo games. The facility also occasionally hosts larger events such as the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's annual powwow. BMW Construction, of Coeur d'Alene, will begin renovating the facility and building a 40-foot by 60-foot concert stage in early May. After construction is completed in mid-June, the events center will be able to host up to 8,000 people for concerts and other events.
- Realtor Marshall Mend and builder Art Elliott plan to break ground on a \$2 million, 20,000-square-foot office and retail development on the northwest corner of Government Way and Orchard Avenue in Hayden this spring. Hayden Village is expected to be ready for tenants by this fall.
- Western Garnet International Ltd. is moving its corporate headquarters from 1836 Northwest Boulevard in Coeur d'Alene to the second floor of the Riverstone One Building. Western Garnet shares the building with Oxyfresh Worldwide, which relocated its corporate headquarters from Spokane to Coeur d'Alene in January. Riverstone is a mixed-use development between the Spokane River and Northwest Boulevard. Western Garnet employs seven people at its corporate headquarters, 50 people at the Emerald Creek Garnet in Benewah County, and 100 more people in India, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, and Seattle.
- Bill and Jane Scott plan to open a restaurant and nightclub in the historic Penney's building in downtown Coeur d'Alene by late spring. The Brix restaurant on the second floor will feature steaks, seafood, and pasta. The Brix nightclub, which will seat more than 100 people, will occupy the lower level, and an office will occupy the mezzanine.
- Developer Marshall Chesrown initially is offering 91 residential lots at his Black Rock development near Rockford Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene. Another 150 will be offered next summer. In total, Chesrown ex-

pects to sell 381 lots at the high-end development on 650 acres. Work continues on the development's 18-hole golf course, slated to open in the summer of 2003.

- A group of Coeur d'Alene doctors, in partnership with Chicago-based National Surgical Hospital Inc., plans to build an \$18 million surgical hospital in Post Falls. The North Idaho Surgical Hospital, which will include four operating rooms and twelve inpatient rooms, is expected to perform about 350 non-emergency surgical procedures per month. When the surgical hospital opens on Mullan Road in the summer of 2003, it will employ about 70 people. Most of the doctors investing in the new surgical hospital are affiliated with the much smaller North Idaho Day Surgery & Laser Center at 2205 North Ironwood Place, which they expect to close once the Post Falls hospital opens.
- Coeur d'Alene recently welcomed these new businesses: Hard Hat Café, a restaurant serving burgers, sausages, sandwiches, and breakfast at 612 Sherman Avenue; a Pizza Hot Spot, making pizza for carry-out at 4055 Government Way; a branch office of Spokane-based insurance brokerage Moloney O'Neill at 7950 Meadowlark; Cobblestone Art, a fine art reproduction shop at 6055 Government Way; Groundzero Board Shop, selling and renting skateboards, snowboards, other sport boards, clothing, and accessories at 1114 Fourth Street; and a second Sonja's Cleaner by Nature, an environmentally conscious clothes cleaning business in the former Westco Martinizing building on Third Street.
- The Coeur d'Alenes Co.—a Spokane-based metals distributing, processing, and fabricating business—recently opened a retail distribution center at 80 West Wilbur in Dalton Gardens where it will sell milled steel, aluminum sheeting, Italian-made wrought-iron, and related products.
- Primerica Financial, a subsidiary of Citigroup, recently opened a financial services office at 306 North Spokane Street in Post Falls.
- Falling precious metal prices during recent years and the sale of its kaolin clay and industrial minerals division in 2001 reduced employment at Hecla Mining's corporate headquarters in Coeur d'Alene to 36 people, half as many people as it employed two years ago. Hecla recently sold its corporate headquarters at 6500 Mineral Drive to a Bellevue, Washington, company. Hecla is leasing half of the building, while other tenants will lease the rest of the building.
- Applebee's 15-month-old restaurant in Post Falls closed in January, putting 22 people out of work.

---

Kathryn Tacke, Regional Labor Economist  
 1221 W. Ironwood Drive, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
 (208) 769-1558 ext. 340  
 E-mail: ktacke@labor.state.id.us